

Message Text

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42

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 NIC-01 OMB-01

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R 041200Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8112

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

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SUBJ: LABOR UNION LEADERSHIP CHANGES

REF: HELSINKI 2047, HELSINKI 1751

BEGIN SUMMARY: AN ERA ENDED IN FINNISH CONFEDERATION
OF TRADE UNIONS (SAK) ON DECEMBER 1 AS PEKKA OIVIO
SUCCEEDED NILO HAMALAINEN WHO SERVED OVER EIGHT
YEARS AS CHAIRMAN. OIVIO MAY HAVE HARD TIME FILLING
PREDECESSOR'S SHOES AND REAL POWER IN SAK MAY PROVE
TO BE PAPERWORKERS' CHAIRMAN AHTOLA. FINLAND HAS NOT
HEARD THE LAST FROM HAMALAINEN, HOWEVER, HE SAID IN
FAREWELL INTERVIEW IN WHICH HE DID NOT REJECT
POSSIBILITY HE MIGHT TRY FOR LEADERSHIP OF SOCIAL
DEMOCRATIC PARTY (SDP). AT SAME TIME ERA ENDED IN
FINLAND'S SECOND LARGEST LABOR ORGANIZATION,
FEDERATION OF CIVIL SERVANTS AND SALARIED EMPLOYEES
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(TVK), WHEN TWENTY-YEAR VETERAN AARNE VALIKANGAS

TURNED OVER HIS INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES PRIOR
TO MOVING NEXT MONTH TO MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS.
END SUMMARY.

1. PEKKA OIVIO TOOK OVER FROM NILO HAMALAINEN
ON DECEMBER 1 AS CHAIRMAN OF THE NEARLY 900,000 MEMBER
SAK. HAMALAINEN MOVES TO CENTRAL UNION OF CONSUMER
COOPERATIVES (KK) WHERE HE BECOMES MANAGING DIRECTOR
NEXT JULY. IN FAREWELL INTERVIEWS HAMALAINEN SAID HE
WILL CONTINUE "TO BE HEARD FROM" BUT DECLINED TO CON-
FIRM SPECULATION THAT HE MAY RUN FOR CHAIRMANSHIP
OF FINNISH SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY.

2. OIVIO ASSUMES SAK LEADERSHIP AT A TIME WHEN SOCIAL
DEMOCRATIC/COMMUNIST COOPERATION WITHIN ITS RANKS
HAS WORN THIN. DURING LAST COUPLE OF YEARS SOCIAL
DEMOCRATS HAVE INCREASINGLY OFTEN IMPOSED DECISIONS ON
STRENGTH OF THEIR MAJORITY RATHER THAN
REACHING A CONSENSUS. COMMUNIST RESPONSE HAS BEEN
INCREASING USE OF WILDCAT STRIKE WHICH UNDERSTAFFED
LABOR COURTS ARE UNABLE AND UNWILLING TO PUNISH. IT
REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER OIVIO, AN UP-FROM-RANKS
SOCIAL DEMOCRAT WHO SEES COMMUNISTS AS HIS PARTY'S
PRINCIPAL COMPETITOR, CAN IMPROVE SITUATION WITHOUT
SACRIFICING SDP INTERESTS. HE BRINGS A RELATIVELY
CLEAN SLATE TO TASK, HOWEVER, HAVING PLAYED A MINOR
ROLE IN MUCH OF RECENT INFIGHTING. A GREATER
PROBLEM FOR OIVIO IS WHETHER HE HAS SUFFICIENT
CHARISMA TO COMMAND RESPECT OF DIVERSE SAK MEMBERSHIP.
TOP MANAGEMENT BARGAINER TOLD LABATT THAT OIVIO
LACKS HAMALAINEN'S CONSISTENCY OF PURPOSE AND
SELF-CONFIDENCE. IN HIS OPINION REAL STRONG MAN IN
SAK WILL PROVE TO BE OIVIO'S SUCCESSOR AS SAK "THIRD"
CHAIRMAN, PAPERWORKERS' UNION CHAIRMAN VEIKKO AHTOLA.

3. TWO OTHER POSITIONS VACATED BY OIVIO HAVE ALSO BEEN
FILLED. HIS SUCCESSOR AS CHAIRMAN OF RAILWAY ENGINEERS
UNION IS HIS FORMER DEPUTY LASSE SYRJANEN. NEW
CHAIRMAN OF 80,000 MEMBER FEDERATION OF CIVIL SERVANTS
AND WORKERS UNIONS (VTY) IS RAILWAY WORKERS' CHAIRMAN
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UNTO KEIJONEN.

4. DECEMBER 1 ALSO MARKED END OF AN ERA IN FINLAND'S
300,000-MEMBER WHITE COLLAR CONFEDERATION OF CIVIL
SERVANTS AND SALARIED EMPLOYEES (TVK). WHEN
MANAGING DIRECTOR, AARNE VALIKANGAS, TURNED OVER HIS
INTERNATIONAL LIAISON RESPONSIBILITIES TO TVK'S
PRESENT EDUCATION SECRETARY KARI O. VIRTANEN.

VALIKANGAS, A LIBERAL PARTY POLITICIAN, PERSONALLY
VUILT TVK FROM GROUND UP OVER PAST 20 YEARS, BUT WAS
OUTMANEUVERED AND PUSSED TO SIDELINES IN RECENT YEARS
BY TVK CHAIRMAN OSO LAAKSO WHO IS CLOSE TO SDP IF NOT
ACTUALLY MEMBER. VALIKANGAS LEAVES TVK COMPLETELY IN
JANUARY WHEN HE TAKES OVER NEW INTERNATIONAL DIVISION
IN MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS WHERE ONE OF HIS MAJOR
RESPONSIBILITIES WILL BE ILO AFFAIRS. VIRTANEN IS
30 YEAR OLD SOCIAL DEMOCRAT, WHO HAS BEEN ADVISOR TO
WORKER GROUP OF FINNISH ILO DELEGATION FOR PAST TWO
YEARS, AND IS GOOD FRIEND OF FINNISH ILO WORKER
DELEGATE, SAK INTERNATIONAL SECRETARY KARI TAPIOLA.
KREHBIEL

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